

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please re-write the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A method for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising the steps of:
  - 4 receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the second storage system;
  - 6 forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a cluster interconnect;
  - 8 processing the data access command at the second storage system;
  - 9 returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via the cluster interconnect; and
  - 11 sending a response to the data access command to the a client from the first storage system.
1. 2. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the storage systems are storage appliances and wherein the data access command is received at a proxy port associated with the first storage appliance.
1. 3. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical port.
1. 4. (Original): The method of claim 2 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port associated with a physical port.
1. 5. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises requested read data.

- 1       6. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises an acknowledgement of a write operation.
- 1       7. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the response comprises a predetermined set of read data.
- 1       8. (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a direct link between the first storage system and the second storage system.
- 1       9. (Currently Amended): A system adapted to proxy data access commands from a first storage system to a second storage system connected via a cluster interconnect, the system comprising:
  - 4              a virtual target layer module interfacing with a virtual adapter on the first storage system, the virtual target module adapted to make a forwarding decision of a received data access request to thereby forward the request to the second storage system.
- 1       10. (Original): The system of claim 9 wherein the forwarding decision is based on a port to which the data access request is directed.
- 1       11. (Original): The system of claim 10 wherein the forwarding decision is based upon a logical unit address contained within the data access request.
- 1       12. (Original): A storage appliance for use in a storage appliance cluster for proxying data access commands received at the storage appliance to a second storage appliance in a storage appliance cluster, the storage appliance comprising:
  - 4              a storage operating system executing on the storage appliance, the storage operating system including a virtual target module adapted to forward received data access commands to the second storage appliance in the storage appliance cluster.

1       13. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 12 wherein the storage operating system  
2       further comprising a virtual adapter that interfaces with the virtual target module and an  
3       interconnect driver for forwarding the received data access commands from the virtual  
4       target module to the second storage appliance via a cluster interconnect managed by the  
5       interconnect driver.

1       14. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 13 wherein the cluster interconnect com-  
2       prises a fibre channel interconnect.

1       15. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 13 wherein the cluster interconnect di-  
2       rectly connects the storage appliance to the second storage appliance.

1       16. (Original): The storage appliance of claim 12 wherein the virtual adapter interfaces  
2       with a virtual interface emulation layer to provide remote direct memory access capabili-  
3       ties for transferring or forwarding received data access commands to the second storage  
4       appliance.

1       17. (Currently Amended): A method for proxying data access commands in the a first  
2       storage system to a second system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising the  
3       steps of:

4              analyzing a received data access command at the first storage system;;  
5              forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system; and  
6              processing the received data access command at the second storage system.

1       18. (Original): The method of claim 17 further comprising the steps of;  
2              returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system;  
3              and

4            sending a response to the data access command to the client from the first storage  
5        system.

1        19. (Original): The method of claim 17 wherein the step of forwarding further comprises  
2        the step of forwarding the data access command to the second storage system via a clus-  
3        ter interconnect.

1        20. (Original): The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a fi-  
2        bre channel link.

1        21. (Original): The method of claim 19 wherein the cluster interconnect comprises a di-  
2        rect link between the first storage system and the second storage system.

1        22. (Original): The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of receiving the data  
2        access command is at a proxy port of the first storage system.

1        23. (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical  
2        port.

1        24. (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port  
2        associated with the physical port.

1        25. (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises requested read  
2        data.

1        26. (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the response comprises an acknowl-  
2        edgement of the write operation.

1    27. (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium, including program instructions  
2    executing on a computer, for proxying data access commands from a first storage system  
3    to a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the computer readable medium  
4    including instructions for performing the steps of:

5                 receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the  
6    second storage system;

7                 forwarding the received data access command to the second storage system via a  
8    cluster interconnect;

9                 processing the data access command at the second storage system;

10                returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system via  
11    the cluster interconnect; and

12                sending a response to the data access command to ~~the a~~ client from the first stor-  
13    age system.

1    28. (Currently Amended): A system for proxying data access commands from a first  
2    storage system to a second storage system connected via a cluster interconnect, the sys-  
3    tem comprising:

4                 means for receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is di-  
5    rected to the second storage system;

6                 means for forwarding the received data access command to the second storage  
7    system via a cluster interconnect;

8                 means for processing the data access command at the second storage system;

9                 means for returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage  
10   system via the cluster interconnect; and

11                means for sending a response to the data access command to ~~the a~~ client from the  
12    first storage system.

- 1    29. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein storage systems are storage appliances
- 2    and the data access command is received at a proxy port associated with the first storage
- 3    appliance.
  
- 1    30. (Original): The method of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a physical
- 2    port.
  
- 1    31. (Original): The method of claim 29 wherein the proxy port comprises a virtual port
- 2    associated with a physical port.
  
- 1    32. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises requested read
- 2    data.
  
- 1    33. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises an acknowledg-
- 2    ement of a write operation.
  
- 1    34. (Original): The method of claim 28 wherein the response comprises a predetermined
- 2    set of read data.

Please add new claims 35 et seq. as follows:

- 1        35. (New): A method for proxying data access commands from a first storage system to  
2        a second storage system in a storage system cluster, the method comprising:
  - 3                receiving a data access command at the first storage system that is directed to the
  - 4                second storage system;
  - 5                forwarding a data access command from the first storage system to the second
  - 6                storage system;
  - 7                processing the data access command at the second storage system; and
  - 8                returning a response from the second storage system to the first storage system.
- 9        36. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises sending a response to the data ac-  
10      cess command from the first storage system.
- 1        37. (New): The method of claim 35 wherein the data access command is forwarded via a  
2      cluster interconnect.
- 1        38. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises receiving by the first storage sys-  
2      tem the data access command that is directed to the second storage system.
- 1        39. (New): The method of claim 35 further comprises returning the response from the  
2      first storage system to a client.
- 1        40. (New): The method of claim 39 wherein the response is returned via the cluster in-  
2      terconnect.